

opposed to those allowed to remain in the city unmolested. Leading targets were Thomas C. Miller, Ari Bryant, Robert B. Pickens, and Salem J. Bell who were arrested for “using

according to dictates of the Secret Nine because of his threat to “wash his black hands in the red blood of some whites” during the campaign. Miller, a wealthy man by Wilmington standards, had worked himself up from slavery to become a



Wilmington Light Infantry and Naval Reserve troops escorting captured blacks. From *Collier's Weekly*, November 26, 1898.
Image: North Carolina State Archives

language calculated to incite the negroes.”¹⁵ These men were also leading businessmen, with Bell and Pickens operating a fish and oyster business, Bryant a butcher shop, and Miller as a money lender and real estate developer.¹⁶ Conversely, other leaders, including many other businessmen summoned as part of the Committee of Colored Citizens, were not slated for removal.¹⁷

Miller's capture was documented by several accounts. Harry Hayden's history of the WLI explained that Miller was arrested

financial giant who regularly bought and sold land, loaned money, and entered into mortgages with both blacks and whites. By Hayden's account, Miller first resisted efforts by Police Captain John Furlong to jail him but was nonetheless escorted to the jail in a wagon. Hayden recounted that Miller's daughter followed the wagon to the jail. Miller supposedly declared while en route to the jail that “he would rather be dead than to have to undergo such humiliation.” Hayden also recounted that Furlong replied to Miller that if he wanted to die, all he needed to do was to jump off the wagon. Thomas Wright of the WLI reported that when his squad arrived at Miller's home, his daughter was on the porch and said he was not at home. Miller was found to be at home, and, after he was arrested,

¹⁵ *Wilmington Messenger*, 11-14-1898.

¹⁶ For more information on the lives of Miller, Bryant, Bell and Pickens, see Appendix A.

¹⁷ For more on the lives of men targeted as members of the Committee of Colored Citizens and for banishment, see Appendix A.